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INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 7677
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RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 3977
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 1743
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 2453
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0728
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 0200
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5838
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SUBJECT: QUARTERLY CONSULAR CORPS ANTI-FRAUD MEETING

¶11. SUMMARY: On September 29, the CG, RSO and the FPM attended the Damascus quarterly anti-fraud meeting. Over 30 representatives from Damascus, Amman and Cairo-based embassies attended to discuss a diverse agenda, but fraud among Iraqi refugees was a recurring theme in all the discussions. End summary.

¶12. GERMAN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM FOR IRAQIS

Germany was wrapping up its Iraqi resettlement program, having accepted 2,500 refugees. The German representative highlighted the general unreliability of Iraqi civil documents, but was particularly skeptical of Iraqi death certificates, estimating that at least 90% of the death certificates submitted were forged. Apart from death certificates, of over 6,500 Iraqi documents reviewed by the Germans, 243 were found to be fraudulent, as follows:

Passports - 13
Citizenship Cards - 54
ID Cards - 110
Birth Certificates - 36
Other - 30

The Germans also provided examples of genuine and fraudulent stamps on documents issued by the Kurdistan Regional Government.

¶13. TRENDS AT DAMASCUS AIRPORT

In discussing fraud trends at Damascus International Airport, participants noted that outward-bound tourism was down to normal levels following the surge during the Muslim holiday period. However, fraudulent travel continues. In the two weeks following the Eid al-Fitr holiday, the Germans had stopped 20 persons from traveling because of forged visas and European residence permits. The general trend appears to be Syrians from the Hassakeh and Qamishly region fleeing military service . The routes chosen are generally via Cairo or Moscow, with some choosing to take advantage of the ability to transit Rome without a visa.

¶14. EU FACT FINDING MISSION CONCERNING IRAQI REFUGEES

Participants reported that an EU Fact Finding Mission, scheduled to visit Damascus October 7-8, followed by a visit to Amman and then several days in Baghdad, will be looking at the Iraqi resettlement process. Its report may set a baseline with regards to the potential to have displaced Iraqis repatriated to Iraq.

¶15. JORDANIAN "T" SERIES PASSPORTS/DOCUMENTS

Canadian participants commented that Canada was embroiled in a discussion about what to do with Palestinians who had arrived in Canada with Jordanian "T" series passports and were subject to deportation. When these deportees arrived in Jordan, the Jordanian authorities stripped them of their right to reside in Jordan and deported them to the occupied West Bank. The discussion is whether deportation to Jordan in such a case is tantamount to deportation to the West Bank.

¶6. Other issues discussed were:

- the potential fraud impact of the new Turkish-Syrian visa accord, enabling visa-free travel between Turkey and Syria for citizens of those countries;
- the imminent start of an Iraqi Airways direct flight from Baghdad to London (via Ljubljana)
- Syrian abuse of UK short-term student visitor visas. The UK is currently identifying high risk factors.
- vulnerabilities in the process through which the IOM verifies Iraqi civil documents.

¶7. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held in November.

Hunter